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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA



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Mozambique

FRELIMO Pardons "Traitors"

The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique publicly ridiculed and then pardoned 240 "traitors" during a mass rally on March 16 at its main camp in southern Tanzania. The US embassy in Dar es Salaam, which received an eye-witness account of the event, reports that it painted a disconcerting picture of the type of government the Front will establish when it takes over in Mozambique upon independence in June.

During the seven-hour rally, former members of the Front and members of opposition groups read confessions of moral turpitude and political crimes they committed during the insurgency against the Portuguese. Some confessed to working with the Portuguese secret police; others said they had been in the pay of US and Israeli secret agents. All confessed to being traitors to the Front.

On signal, a crowd of Front officials and hacks called for the execution of the traitors. Although Front President Samora Machel pardoned them with a great show of magnanimity, some sort of penance will probably be required.

The embassy in Dar es Salaam is concerned over what effect the rally may have on future discussions between US and Front officials on US aid. A main feature of the rally were charges by Paul Gumane, the former president of a defunct liberation group, that several US embassy officials advised and financed him in an anti-Front sabotage campaign. In addition, Machel, in a rally speech, reportedly scoffed at western offers of assistance to Mozambique.

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Malagasy Republic

Still Unsettled

1 The 18-member military directory that took control of the Malagasy Republic on February 11 is preoccupied with matters of national and personal security, according to the US embassy. In addition, there are signs that the unity of the ruling group is beginning to crack. Coming trials of police rebels and some old-line politicians could lead to more trouble on Madagascar.

2+3 The military group has imposed very tight security since the assassination in early February of Colonel Ratsimandrava after only six days as head of government and the subsequent clash between government forces and a police unit that sheltered the assassins. The military remains highly visible, a curfew is in force, and gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited. Tight controls on the movement of people on the island and internationally are in effect. The Malagasy news media are heavily censored and most foreign publications have been barred. Even diplomatic and private international communications have been subjected to censorship. Members of the ruling military group fear for their personal safety, as well as the outbreak of communal violence on the island.

The tight security measures have prevented overt antigovernment activity or public demonstrations, but have also contributed to the spread of wild rumors, added to shortages of consumer goods and the existing economic distress, and generally produced a climate of apprehension and frustration.

4 Brigadier General Gilles Andriamahazo, head of the ruling military group, is beginning to voice criticism in private of the 18-member directory. In a conversation with the US ambassador last week, Andriamahazo reflected some frustration with the group, which was hastily thrown together just after the assassination of Ratsimandrava with a view to

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5 achieving ethnic balance and with little regard for whether those chosen had any talent for government administration. Andriamahazo, who is reputedly friendly to the US, also alluded to problems he is having with radical directory members led by Commander Didier Ratsiraka, a former foreign minister who was the architect of Madagascar's policy of militant nonalignment. Andriamahazo and Ratsiraka are apparently now locked in a struggle for control of Malagasy foreign policy.

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1 Directory members are apprehensive over public reaction to the trials growing out of the assassination; they will begin on March 21 and will be prolonged. According to a Malagasy newspaper, the total number of persons to go before a military tribunal might reach 300. The Malagasy radio reported that the persons charged include police and military dissidents, plus Andre Resampa, secretary-general of the Socialist Party, and Philibert Tsiranana, who was the country's president from independence in 1960 until he was forced out of office in 1972. A trial of Tsiranana, still highly regarded by many coastal tribesmen, could cause problems for the government.

7 The overall handling of the trials poses a twofold danger for the directory. If the persons on trial receive stiff sentences, the coastal people may engage in anti-regime activity; if they receive light sentences, students in Tananarive, most of whom come from highland tribes, and other discontented groups may foment disorders.

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Ghana-UK

Warming Relations

2 Ghana's relations with Britain, traditionally Accra's major aid donor and biggest creditor, have been warming since Colonel Acheampong's junta concluded an agreement last year to reschedule the large medium-term debt incurred under former President Nkrumah. The latest evidence of this warming trend was the recent good will tour of the first British ministerial-level official to visit Ghana since Acheampong's military regime took power three years ago. Shortly before the official's arrival--timed to coincide with the 18th anniversary of Ghana's independence from Britain--London announced an interest-free development loan to Ghana of \$23 million.

2 Accra's relations with the UK and other Western countries began cooling in February 1972 when Acheampong repudiated a portion of Ghana's debt and unilaterally altered the repayment schedule of the remaining debt. The UK and other creditor governments responded by imposing a moratorium on new aid pending a satisfactory settlement of the debt issue.

2 One of the remaining irritants in Ghanaian-UK relations is the short-term debt inherited from the government of former Prime Minister Busia whom Acheampong overthrew. Acheampong has promised the UK full payment, but this has been delayed by Ghana's present foreign exchange shortage. Also, no final agreement has been reached for compensating the largely British-owned timber and mining firms in which the Acheampong government has taken 55 percent control.

Busia, who was in London for medical treatment when Acheampong took over, continues to live in exile in Oxford and to plot ineffectually against the junta. The junta is deeply suspicious of Busia, but his presence in Britain has never caused serious problems between Accra and London.

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Dahomey

Radicals Hand Down Death Sentences

1+2 A kangaroo court controlled by President Kerekou and his radical cohorts recently sentenced to death Captain Assogba, former President Zinsou, and five others allegedly involved in Assogba's attempt last January to oust Kerekou and install a more moderate regime. Four of the seven defendants, including Zinsou, were condemned in absentia. Public attempts in Cotonou to protest the sentences have been quashed by Kerekou's supporters.

The executions may be carried out soon unless Kerekou gives in to Nigerian diplomatic pressure to commute the death sentences. The Nigerians have some leverage with the Cotonou government as a result of their recent promise to Kerekou of a badly needed loan for various development projects.

Kerekou's moderate opponents within Dahomey's factionalized military regime appear cowed and leaderless at this stage in the intensified power struggle touched off by Assogba's takeover bid. There were some indications a few weeks ago that Kerekou might be replaced by a more moderate triumvirate, but the radical leader seems to be still firmly in place.

2 The outlook now is for more harsh measures by Kerekou and the radical faction who seek to consolidate and press forward with their avowed "revolution." If the executions are carried out, they would be the first since independence, and they might prompt the families and tribes of the victims to retaliate with reprisals of their own. Executions might also stimulate the moderates finally to coalesce against Kerekou.

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Zaire

A Look at Mobutu's Foreign Policy

Over the past several years President Mobutu Sese Seko has made rapid strides in bringing Zaire into the mainstream of African affairs. When Mobutu took power in 1965, Zaire was regarded as a pariah on the African continent because of the turmoil that followed independence in 1960. In the world context, the country was widely viewed as a ward of the UN, Belgium, and the US.

Ten years later, Zaire has achieved a major voice in African forums, and the 44-year-old Mobutu is clearly seeking to become Africa's leading statesman. He is pursuing this goal in large part by deliberately distancing himself from both Belgium and the US while fostering close relations with China, North Korea, and the Arab world. He is also developing close relations with France and West Germany. So far, Mobutu's new pattern of foreign relations has not included the Soviet Union; relations with Moscow continue to be no more than correct, and occasionally subject to heavy strains.

The Chinese Connection

When China was admitted to the UN in 1971, Mobutu recognized that, among countries in Africa, Zaire stood virtually alone with the white minority government of South Africa in not recognizing Peking. Mobutu finally established diplomatic ties with China in the fall of 1972. Since then he has visited Peking twice, most recently in December 1974.

So far, only modest assistance has materialized from China, although the publicity Mobutu has given it has made the aid seem formidable. China granted Zaire a \$100 million credit during Mobutu's

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first visit to Peking, but apparently very little of the credit has yet been drawn. Credits committed thus far have been earmarked to support a Chinese-staffed hospital in Kinshasa and to provide for the purchase of \$10 million worth of consumer goods. In addition, some 150 Chinese technicians are presently in Zaire.

A gift of Chinese military equipment, including 30 tanks, some artillery pieces and small arms and ammunition, is expected to arrive in Kinshasa in the near future. Mobutu was also instrumental in getting Chinese equipment and instructors for the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, the Angolan nationalist group he has long sponsored. The front is now one of the three nationalist groups comprising the transitional government in Angola.

At this point, Mobutu appears more anxious to use China to enhance his nonaligned credentials and as a model for national development rather than as a major source of economic assistance. He is highly impressed by Peking's success in mobilizing the Chinese population for the attainment of political and economic goals. Since 1971, Mobutu has been actively calling for a massive effort to upgrade the national consciousness and motivate Zairians to work for national self-sufficiency, particularly in agriculture. He is counting heavily on the Chinese agricultural technicians now in Zaire to serve as examples for Zairians to follow.

Links With Pyongyang

Mobutu's relations with North Korea have only recently begun to pick up steam even though Zaire established diplomatic relations with the Kim Il-sung regime in December 1972. Mobutu skipped Pyongyang when he made his first trip to China, but he went to North Korea in December 1974. The North Koreans agreed to sell Zaire a variety of light arms and artillery equipment sufficient for 12,000-13,000 men and to provide a 112-man military advisory team.

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Zaire still has diplomatic ties with South Korea. Although relations have cooled considerably in recent years, Mobutu probably views Seoul's presence in Kinshasa as useful evidence of his commitment to nonalignment.

Looking Toward Mecca

Mobutu's ties with the Arab world have been less profitable than the Zairian president thought when he broke relations with Israel two days before the outbreak of the 1973 Middle East war. He has had little success, for example, in his efforts to obtain concessionary oil prices and financial assistance from the Arabs. He has worked out a \$50 million loan from Abu Dhabi, but the money has not yet been made available owing in part to bureaucratic confusion in Kinshasa. He is currently sending out economic feelers to Iran.

Despite his disillusionment with the Arabs, Mobutu will continue to foster good relations with them. There is little chance that he will re-establish formal ties with Tel Aviv. Arab influence in the Organization of African Unity and Mobutu's commitment to Afro-Arab solidarity--one of his major policies--would make it difficult for him to resume ties, despite widespread private admiration in Zaire for Israel's tenacity and the legacy of a once-impressive Israeli paratroop training program that included Mobutu himself.

Relations with the West

Mobutu's relations with the West, particularly Belgium and the US, are dictated largely by a desire to assert his country's economic and political independence. He realizes that Zaire's economy, almost totally dependent on income from copper exports, is closely tied to western economic conditions. At the same time, however, he believes the economic development programs sponsored in Zaire by Western countries have a neocolonial tinge, and he would like to diversify his sources

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of assistance in order to keep any one country from having too large a stake in Zaire's economy.

The sharp drop in copper prices during the past year and the simultaneous sharp rise in production costs because of the "energy crisis," coupled with heavy government spending, have led to a severe foreign exchange crisis limiting imports and debt servicing. The slump has brought on an erosion of creditor confidence in Zaire, particularly among US and Belgian banks. The International Monetary Fund is currently studying Zaire's economic plight and is likely to recommend stringent controls that Mobutu may find unpalatable.

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[redacted] Mobutu apparently is considering alternate ways to meet the financial bind, based largely on exploiting improved ties with France and West Germany. France, particularly, is anxious to nourish the relationship and reportedly is helping Zaire arrange a \$240 million petrodollar loan [redacted] Mobutu is apparently hopeful that the deal will be nailed down by early April and that the loan will help restore investor confidence.

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Mobutu has been encouraging increased West German investment, which is modest at present. He claims that by 1980 West Germany will be the largest foreign investor in Zaire.

Belgium, which in 1965 still maintained a firm grip on the Zairian economy through a complex array of holding companies and subsidiaries, has been the main target of Mobutu's efforts to assert national control. Since late 1966, he has nationalized virtually all Belgian investments in Zaire while compensating Belgian mining interests with lucrative technical assistance and distribution contracts. Mobutu has further diluted Belgian involvement in the mining industry by awarding concessions to Japanese interests and an American-led consortium.

Mobutu's relations with the US are a source of frustration for him. He hasn't forgotten how

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vital US support was for him in the early years of his regime, and he continues to offer profuse expressions of his gratitude in private. Over the years, however, he has come to regard himself as Washington's unofficial adviser on African matters and is dismayed when the US does not follow his advice or see events from his perspective.

Washington's failure to support anti-Portuguese liberation groups prior to the coup in Portugal, its refusal to supply Mobutu with modern military hardware, and a belief that Washington gives low priority to African affairs have brought Mobutu, as he has become more self-confident, to the conclusion that his aspirations for recognition as a major African nationalist leader called for the cultivation of a less pro-US reputation. This conclusion will continue to be a determining factor in his actions regarding the US.

Nevertheless, despite a desire to put distance between himself and Washington, Mobutu is heavily dependent on US financial interests to find a solution to Zaire's severely faltering economy. Private investment by US firms in Zaire now exceeds \$100 million in book value, and US banks are deeply involved in securing financial assistance for numerous industrial projects.

No Gains for Moscow

Mobutu has never forgotten Soviet meddling in Zaire in the troubled years immediately after independence, and relations between the two countries have remained cool despite occasional efforts by both parties to seek accommodation. Last August, for example, the Soviets sent a military delegation to Kinshasa, reportedly to discuss the purchase by Zaire of a Soviet air defense system. Mobutu indicated [] at the time that he would visit the Soviet Union in December. In November, however, Mobutu was asked by the Soviets for a postponement, and he promptly cancelled the trip altogether. Mobutu is now again keeping the Soviets at arms-length and, given Moscow's limited

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interest in Zaire, relations are likely to remain cool for the near future.

Southern Africa

Mobutu's major foreign policy concern in southern Africa is to ensure that the government that takes power in Angola at independence next November is friendly to Zaire. Mobutu depends heavily on rail and port facilities in Angola to ship Zairian copper abroad and would be hard pressed to find alternative transportation facilities if a hostile Angolan regime sought to interfere with Zairian exports. Angola's long border with Zaire and the presence of former Zairian secessionist elements in Angola are a security worry for him.

Mobutu would also like access to the oil produced in Cabinda, a province of Angola that is separated from the rest of the territory by Zaire's narrow corridor to the sea. Both Portugal and all elements of the Angolan transitional government regard Cabinda as an integral part of Angola. Mobutu would prefer an independent Cabinda with close ties to Zaire, and he reportedly intends to push for Cabindan independence at the special meeting of foreign ministers of the Organization of African Unity in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania next month. That organization, however, has consistently upheld colonial boundaries and is likely to support the traditional ties between Angola and Cabinda.

At present, the Angolan nationalist groups that are friendly to Mobutu hold the upper hand in the transitional government. If these groups succeed in establishing themselves as the dominant political force after independence next November, Mobutu may choose to soft-pedal his Cabinda policy, at least for a time.

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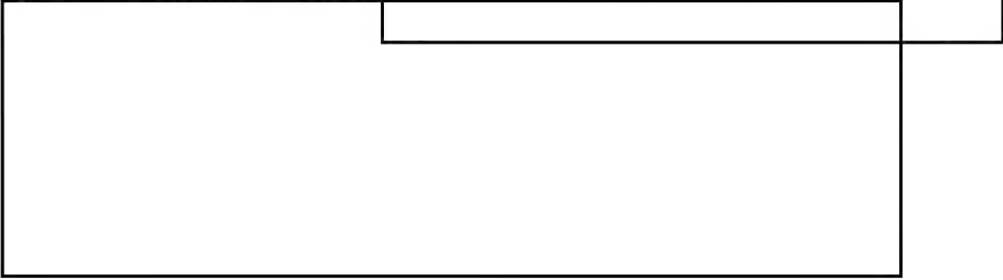
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Conclusions

Mobutu's foreign policy will continue to be shaped in large part by domestic economic considerations. He seems determined to broaden his sources of foreign assistance as much as possible, but unless he can regain investor confidence, foreign governments and private interests are likely to become increasingly hesitant to provide continued credit. In his present mood, Mobutu is likely to translate this hesitancy into "economic sabotage" and fight back with diplomatic attacks, in which case the US would be a particularly inviting target.



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